

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method for controlling access to emergency services comprising:
  - 5 a) receiving call setup requests from at least one originating device;
  - b) determining select call setup requests from the call setup requests, the select call setup requests being received from authorized users to initiate a call for emergency services; and
  - c) forwarding the select call setup requests toward at least one terminating device associated with the emergency services, wherein one of the at least one originating or terminating devices resides on a packet network.
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2. The method of claim 1 wherein ones of the call setup requests that are not the select call setup requests are not forwarded toward the at least one terminating device.
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3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
  - 20 a) creating emergency information for each of the select call setup requests; and
  - b) inserting the emergency information into the select call setup requests prior to forwarding the select call setup requests toward the at least one terminating device.
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4. The method of claim 3 wherein the emergency information is provided in an emergency header field of the select call setup requests.
5. The method of claim 3 wherein the emergency information inserted into the select call setup requests is encrypted.
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6. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting a priority level from a plurality of priority levels for each of the select call setup requests and inserting the selected priority levels into corresponding ones of the select call setup requests.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the select call setup requests are sent toward the at least one terminating device when the at least one terminating device is in an overload condition.

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8. The method of claim 1 wherein the call setup requests are sent toward the at least one terminating device when network elements involved in forwarding the call setup requests are in an overload condition.

10 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the call setup requests are processed with a higher priority by any network element that receives them.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein forwarding the select call setup requests toward the at least one terminating device comprises sending 15 the select call setup requests to a proxy for the at least one terminating device.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the call setup requests are received over the packet network and the select call setup requests are 20 forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over the packet network.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the call setup requests are received over the packet network and the select call setup requests are 25 forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over a circuit-switched network.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein the select call setup requests forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over the circuit-30 switched network are initial address messages.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein the call setup requests are session initiation protocol INVITE messages.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein the call setup requests are received over a circuit-switched network and the select call setup requests are forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over the packet network.

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16. The method of claim 15 wherein the call setup requests are initial address messages.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein the select call setup requests forwarded toward the at least one terminating device are session initiation protocol INVITE messages.

18. A system for controlling access to emergency services comprising:

15 a) at least one communication interface; and  
b) a control system associated with the at least one communication interface and adapted to:

20 i) receive call setup requests from at least one originating device;  
ii) determine select call setup requests from the call setup requests, the select call setup requests being received from authorized users to initiate a call for emergency services; and

25 iii) forward the select call setup requests toward at least one terminating device associated with the emergency services, wherein one of the at least one originating or terminating devices resides on a packet network.

30 19. The system of claim 18 wherein ones of the call setup requests that are not the select call setup requests are not forwarded toward the at least one terminating device.

20. The system of claim 18 wherein the control system is further adapted to:

- 5                   a) create emergency information for each of the select call setup requests; and
- b) insert the emergency information into the select call setup requests prior to forwarding the select call setup requests toward the at least one terminating device.
- 21. The system of claim 20 wherein the emergency information is provided in an emergency header field of the select call setup requests.
- 10    22. The system of claim 20 wherein the emergency information inserted into the select call setup requests is encrypted.
- 15    23. The system of claim 18 wherein the control system is further adapted to select a priority level from a plurality of priority levels for each of the select call setup requests and insert the selected priority levels into corresponding ones of the select call setup requests.
- 20    24. The system of claim 18 wherein the select call setup requests are sent toward the at least one terminating device when the at least one terminating device is in an overload condition.
- 25    25. The system of claim 18 wherein the call setup requests are sent toward the at least one terminating device when network elements involved in forwarding the call setup requests are in an overload condition.
- 26. The system of claim 18 wherein the call setup requests are processed with a higher priority by any network element that receives them.
- 30    27. The system of claim 18 wherein to forward the call setup requests toward the at least one terminating device, the control system is further adapted to send the select call setup requests to a proxy for the at least one terminating device.

28. The system of claim 18 wherein the call setup requests are received over the packet network and the select call setup requests are forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over the packet network.

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29. The system of claim 18 wherein the call setup requests are received over the packet network and the select call setup requests are forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over a circuit-switched network.

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30. The system of claim 29 wherein the select call setup requests forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over the circuit-switched network are initial address messages.

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31. The method of claim 29 wherein the call setup requests are session initiation protocol INVITE messages.

32. The system of claim 18 wherein the call setup requests are received over a circuit-switched network and the select call setup requests are forwarded toward the at least one terminating device over the packet network.

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33. The system of claim 32 wherein the call setup requests are initial address messages.

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34. The system of claim 32 wherein the select call setup requests forwarded toward the at least one terminating device are session initiation protocol INVITE messages.

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35. A computer readable media with software for controlling access to emergency services, said software comprising instructions for a control system to:

a) receive call setup requests from at least one originating device;

- b) determine select call setup requests from the call setup requests, the select call setup requests being received from authorized users to initiate a call for emergency services; and
- c) forward the select call setup requests toward at least one terminating device associated with the emergency services, wherein one of the at least one originating or terminating devices resides on a packet network.

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